

## **WCSA Class Descriptions – Fall 2021**

The Westport Center for Senior Activities (WCSA) is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for adults age 60 years or older by offering the opportunity to continue to learn and develop; to maintain optimum physical, mental, and social well-being; and to enjoy recreation and companionship in a pleasant and safe environment. The WCSA offers programs in the arts, exercise, culinary, French language study, wellness, current events, and support groups. Below is a list of class descriptions, and on page 8 you will find the instructor's biographies in alphabetical order.

### **Art, Music & Writing Classes\***

**Abstract Art:** Abstract art uses visual language of shape, form, color and line to create a composition which may exist with a degree of independence from visual references in the world. In this class you will incorporate nature into your design. This is a perfect class to discover your creative self. You do not need to know how to draw.

Instructor: Althea Ericsson. Class limit: 10.

**3–D Origami:** Nor Smitobol will be teaching a class in 3–D origami sculpture. Learn to make the basic fold and then create 3-dimensional sculptures. Materials fee: \$10.

Instructor: Nor Smitobol. Class limit: 5.

**Beading and Jewelry:** Create beautiful neck pieces, bracelets and earrings using old findings and purchased beads. You can also make beads with colorful polymer clay.

*Please note you must bring your own tools and supplies. \*See art supply list for details.*

Instructor: Kyra Avalotis. Class limit: 12.

**Bringing the Outdoors In – Painting Landscapes:** Working from photos, the class will study composition, light, color, and value. Stretch your sense of form, color, content, and the image-making process. Paint and draw in any media of your choice.

Instructor: Chris Goldbach. Class limit: 20.

**Drawing, Mixed Levels:** This class is for someone with some drawing skills or those looking to sharpen existing skills or an utter beginner who is ready to delve deeper than just doodling. Basic media and techniques will be explored with a variety of subjects.

Instructor: Chris Goldbach. Class limit: 20.

**Drawing Flowers:** This course focuses on a different flower each week, looking closely at the parts and discovering what characteristics make it different. We draw the flowers in pencil with emphasis on accuracy and form. Instructor, Dick Rauh is a botanical artist and teacher living in Westport. His work appears in many public and private collections throughout the country. Instructor: Dick Rauh. Class limit: 15.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Knit One – Nibble One:** Join our Zoom program to knit a healing shawl for people diagnosed with cancer. These cozy shawls provide a “hug” to those battling this disease. A tote bag with yarn, needles, directions, and a gift of Nelle’s Nibbles is included. This is a perfect (easy) all knit project. Experienced knitters are welcome to create their own patterns. For crochet, you may use a size 13 (N) hook. Instructor: Ellen Lane. Cost: \$25.00 for kit, paid to instructor at the first class. \$12.00 thereafter for additional shawl yarn. *Note: This is not an instructional program.* Class limit: 10

**Mastering the Medium of Your Choice:** Instructor Linda McKie–McClellan will guide you in mastering the medium of your choice: pencils, drawing, pastels, watercolor, acrylic and water-based oils. Linda will give demonstrations of beginner and advanced techniques. This class is open to all levels. Class limit: 9.

**Oil Painting:** This course is appropriate for the beginner, as well as, the experienced painter. Subjects will range from still life to landscapes. Supply list will be provided. Instructor: Judy Lambertson. Class limit: 10.

**Open Art:** Tuesday and Thursday mornings, both art rooms will be available to artists to work on their own projects and collaborate with others. With social distancing requirements still in effect, there will be limited space. **Pre-registration is required.** No drop-ins allowed. Class limit:10.

**Painting En Pleine Air:** Artist Judy Lambertson will be guiding you in the techniques of painting En Pleine Air. This class will be held outdoors at selected parks in Westport, so please dress appropriately for the sun and cool weather. You will need to bring your own easel to use outside. You may prefer to bring a small, folding table and chair with a tabletop easel. Suggested medias: oils, watercolor, pastels, colored pencils. Supply list will be provided. This class is a partnership with the Westport Parks and Recreation Department. Class limit: 5.

**Stained Glass:** Nor Smitobol is inviting anyone interested in learning about stained glass to join him on Friday mornings in the art room. Nor can help you get started or help in completing a project you are working on. For beginner’s, you will learn how to cut and grind glass and put them together to complete one simple project and then you may decide to go forward. After you complete a simple project, your own tools and materials will be required. Class limit: 7.

**Ukulele for Beginners:** Join Wendy Matthews and learn to play this fun instrument. You do not need to be able to read music, just come and have fun! This class is for complete beginners. Information on renting or purchasing a ukulele will be discussed the first week. Wendy will have ukuleles to borrow for the first two weeks. Instructor: Wendy Matthews. Class limit: 10.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Ukulele/Intermediate Level:** For those who already know how to play the uke and wish to continue to build their ukulele skills. Play, sing, and have fun! Instructor: Wendy Matthews. Class limit: 10.

**Working with Watercolor Pencils and Colored Pencils:** Exploration of both mediums can be explored in the eight-week class. We will use traditional colored pencils, explore the use of watercolor pencils, or combine both! These "twins" are very different when it comes to application. Demos will be given by the instructor to help you to explore both; go for a rich sheen or a watercolor feeling. Instructor: Lisa Arnold. Class limit: 12.

***\*See the art supply list on the WCSA website for supplies required for all art classes.***

## **WCSA Exercise & Dance Classes**

**Arthritis & Balance Class:** This class will take you through a series of exercises from the Arthritis Foundation to alleviate arthritis symptoms and improve your balance. It will include seated and standing exercises that you can even perform with your cane or walker. Instructor: Nancy Gollinger is a multi-certified fitness professional who focuses on improving the health of special populations. Class limit: 10.

**Balance, Boxing, Bands and More:** Class includes balance, mobility and movement, a circuit style format for strength and agility exercises and boxing. Large bag work will be included. Boxing gloves are provided. Instructor: Judy Samuels. Class limit: 10.

**Cardio/Strength Intervals:** This alternating cardio/strength workout will get your heart pumping and your muscles moving – all to motivating music! Instructor: Shelley Moll. Class limit: 10.

**Chair Aerobics:** This seated workout will keep your joints flexible, improve your range of motion and mobility. You will strengthen and stabilize your muscles, resulting in improved balance. You can expect to see improvement in your overall health and fitness. Instructor: Shelley Moll. Class limit: 24.

**Dance and Stretch:** A dance inspired cardio fitness program that is great for men and women. Learn the basic steps of Merengue, Mambo, Cha Cha, Foxtrot, Waltz and Tango. No partners required. Instructor: Sandy Adamczyk. Class limit: 14.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Essentrics – Gentle Stretch:** Essentrics is a no-impact fitness program that combines stretching and strengthening with gentle, flowing exercises. This unique workout may help relieve chronic conditions such as back and neck pain, arthritis, bursitis, plantar fasciitis, and sciatica. It also increases mobility, improves balance, and keeps joints healthy. This class is done standing or using a chair. Instructor: Dyan DeCastro. Class Limit:

**Functional Fitness:** This class will be held in our gym and includes using both the cardio equipment, fitness machines and free weights. Participants do intervals of cardio, strength, and mobility exercises. Instructors: Judy Samuels, Shelley Moll. Class limit: 6.

**Mind and Muscle Hour:** Patty Kondub designed this “social based brain training” program to help improve the speed of thinking, and to help improve short- and long-term memory. Patty taps into strategies from a multitude of institutions, experts, and research worldwide in the five years she has taught this class. Balance and posture exercises that can be performed standing or sitting make up the “muscle” part of the hour. Enjoy physical and mental exercise while having fun and laughs, too!  
Class limit: 24.

**Muscle and Tone:** This strength training class uses hand-held weights and will include balance and core work. A fun total body workout that will leave you energized and feeling great. Please bring your own mat for floor work. Class will include a warm-up with stretching, lower and upper body strength training, balance, and core work on a mat. Instructor: Judy Samuels/Shelly Moll. Class limit: 6.

**Parkinson’s Fitness Class:** Class will meet every **Wednesday from 10:15 – 11:00 am** except for the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month when the Parkinson’s Support Group will meet. Instructor, Ruth Sherman will lead the exercise class through balance, stretch and weight-bearing exercises. Offered free of charge. Class limit: 24.

**Pilates Mat for Strength and Flexibility:** An exercise system focused on improving flexibility and strength for the total body with a series of controlled movements engaging your body and mind. Students must bring their own mat and be able to get up and down from the floor without help. Instructor: Charlene Erwin. Class limit: 24.

**Rise and Shine Yoga:** Focus on maintaining flexibility of the entire body. Attention to range of motion, balance, breath awareness and a light meditation are included. Instructor: Paula Pastorelli-Schooler, R.N., Certified Yoga Therapist. Class limit: 8 for Thursday class and there is no limit for Saturday class on Zoom.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Small Group Personal Training/Advanced:** This class is a continuation of Small Group Personal Training – Beginner Level. Each person will continue with their personalized strength training program with new exercises added for increased variety and challenge. It is recommended that this class be taken 2 times per week.

Instructor: Ilene Boyar. Class limit:7.

**Small Group Personal Training/Beginners:** Participants will receive a personalized strength training program that will focus on the individual's needs and goals. Programs include a cardiovascular warm-up, stretching and strength training routine. Exercises and weights will be tracked on charts to allow participants to monitor their progress. It is recommended that this class be taken 2 times per week to build strength and bone density, improve balance and reduce risk of injury. ***This class is for beginner's only.***

Instructor: Ilene Boyar. Class limit:7.

**Strength Training:** This class emphasizes flexibility and balance exercises to stretch and strengthen all muscle groups. Hand weights can be used for students that are knowledgeable and experienced with the exercises.

Instructor: Sandy Adamczyk. Class limit: 14.

**Tai Chi:** These classes teach the traditional Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan, a gentle form of exercise that builds strength, balance, coordination, and focus.

Instructor: Mari Lewis. Class limit:10.

- **Intermediate:** Study of the second section of the Traditional Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. Previous study of the beginner's section is required.
- **Advanced Tai Chi:** A review and fine tuning of the Traditional Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. Previous study of the intermediate section is required.

**Tap Dancing:** Tap dancing is a mild aerobic exercise. It exercises every part of you: your brain, body and spirit. The best part of participating in tap dancing is it puts a smile on your face. Tap shoes are preferred. Suggested websites to purchase shoes: Capezio (<https://www.capezio.com/>) or Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).

Instructor Sandy Adamczyk. Class limit:10.

**Weights in Motion:** Weights in Motion is a fun, high energy class using light handheld weights. The continuous movement to the beat of the music will strengthen and tone the muscles for a total body workout. Instructor: Shelley Moll. Class limit : 10.

**Yogalates:** Yogalates is sometimes thought of as a fusion practice of "East meets West," because it merges the ancient Indian practice of yoga with the Western practice of Pilates. It is said to harness the physical and mental benefits of both practices, and its advocates describe it as a comprehensive exercise system. Please bring a pillow and mat. Instructor: Jeannie Stevens Labate. Class limit: 10.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Yoga for Total Health:** Learn the basics of Kripalu-based Hatha Yoga in a gentle, warm environment. Students must have their own mat and pillows and be able to get up and down from the floor without help. Instructor: Denise O'Hearn. Class limit: 24.

**Yoga – Very Gentle Chair:** This very gentle class respects all physical limitations and uses a chair for those who cannot navigate up and down from the floor. Each class is tailored to the group's specific needs and focuses on postures and breathing techniques. The class ends in a guided meditation and deep relaxation to help us remember that we are perfect as we are. Instructor: Maria Vailakis-Wippick.

**Yoga for Strength, Relaxation, and Rejuvenation:** This class honors where you are in body, mind, and energy. We practice using ancient postures and breathing techniques that help build awareness and strength to improve your posture, develop ease of movement and create an enhanced sense of stability and well-being. Instructor: Maria Vailakis-Wippick.

**Beginning Yoga:** You will learn the foundational postures to help with balance, strength, and flexibility. You will be taught meditation and relaxation techniques for overall well-being. Come with an open mind and heal your body and mind. Please bring a pillow and a mat. Instructor: Jeannie Stevens Labate. Class limit:10.

**Yoga for Wellbeing:** Mindful exploration of breath and movement in a gentle-moderate class, thoughtfully sequenced to increase self-awareness, relieve aches and pains, restore flexibility and strength and experience deep relaxation through guided meditation. Instructor: Paula Pastorelli-Schooler, R.N., Certified Yoga Therapist  
Class limit: 10.

**Yoga for Movement Disorders:** This class helps with rebuilding strength, balance and flexibility for those with Parkinson's Disease and dystonia. You will learn a flow of poses specifically designed to benefit individuals whose voluntary movement is challenged. This practice will help to rebuild strength, balance and flexibility. Seated and standing poses are offered and concludes with a short meditative practice. This class is appropriate for all bodies who seek to improve balance, focus and strength. Handouts provided for home practice. Instructor: Paula Schooler R.N., Certified Yoga Therapist.  
Class limit: 12.

**Zen Flow:** A yoga inspired class, stretching, and strengthening the body. The calming music and relaxation at the end of class will leave you feeling "Zen." Instructor: Shelley Moll

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**



## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Zumba Gold:** Ditch the workout and join the party in this easy-to-follow dance class. Enjoy the rhythms of the world, including Latin, Swing, Oldies and Pop. Get your workout in through large flowing movements that should not put undue stress on the body, all the while smiling and lifting your spirits with upbeat music and moves. It is cardio and muscle and its emphasis is always on FUN! Everyone is encouraged to modify moves for their fitness level, and we are always happy to have newcomers. So, come on -- join in! Instructor: Karen Liss. Class limit:10.

### **Foreign Languages & Games**

**Conversational French:** You will speak French from the moment you walk into class to the moment you leave. This class strives to improve your speaking and listening skills. Instructor: Nell Mednick. Class limit:10

**Intermediate French:** We study from the textbook, French is Fun by Gail Stein, Second edition for advanced students. We discuss handouts and they are emailed to the class every week in advance. Instructor: Nell Mednick. Class limit:10.

**Conversational Spanish:** According to a study published by Instituto Cervantes, “there are 41 million native Spanish-speakers in the United States, plus a further 11.6 million who are bilingual. This puts the US ahead of Colombia (48 million) and Spain (46 million) in terms of Spanish-speakers, and second only to Mexico (121 million)”. In this class, you will speak Spanish from the moment you walk into class to the moment you leave. This class strives to improve your speaking and listening skills. Instructor: Nell Mednick. Class limit:10.

**Beginning Spanish:** We study from the textbook, Easy Spanish-Step-By-Step by Barbara Bregstein. This class starts at the beginning. Instructor: Nell Mednick. Class limit:10.

**Beginners Bridge 1:** This class is for the real beginner bridge player. It will cover the basics and the major suits. *Note: There is a required text for this class which will be purchased from the instructor. Book Cost: \$15.00.* Instructor: Sharon Lyons. Class limit: 12.

**The Stayman & Jacoby Transfer Conventions:** These two conventions are necessary to becoming a good bridge player. They appear constantly throughout playing bridge. A definite necessity to advance in bridge playing. Learn about these two techniques in this 8-session course. Instructor: Sharon Lyons. Class limit: 12.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Beginner Mahjong:** Mahjong is a tile-based game that was developed in China during the Qing dynasty and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. Similar to the Western card game rummy, Mahjong is a game of skill, strategy, and calculation and involves a degree of chance. 2021 Mahjong card is provided. Instructor: Shelley Moll. Class limit: 12.

**Thursday BINGO:** Every Thursday the WCSA hosts BINGO! We provide the cards, and you provide the nickels! BINGO is from 1:15 to 2:00 pm in the café. Cost is 5 cents per card. You may play up to six cards per game. Pre-registration is required.

### **Support Groups**

**Alzheimer's Support:** The purpose of early-stage support groups is to provide a safe and supportive environment of peers who are living in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia and their care partners. These groups offer dementia-related education, emotional support, and connections with resources so that the group members may enhance their lives in the midst of this disease. This group is for people living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia and are in the early stage of the disease. "Early stage" refers to people of any age with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia, who are in the beginning stage of the disease. In the early stage of Alzheimer's, most people function independently with limited support from a care partner. To register please contact Heather Gately, Home Instead Senior Care at 203-833-9924.

**Just for Women:** Join this casual women's chat group at the WCSA. The group meets to discuss issues or challenges women may be facing in their life and share in a supportive atmosphere. Personal stories will remain strictly confidential. Instructor: Elizabeth Atkin, MA, LPC, NCC, Counselor/Social Worker, Department of Human Services, Westport, Connecticut. Class limit: 15.

**Let Go of Stress & Tension:** Stress and tension take a toll on the body and mind, but you can learn to let go and relax. In this class you will be guided through proven stress techniques including mindfulness, breathing and guided imagery to experience a state of deep relaxation. Instructor: Deirdre Ekholdt, LCSW. Class limit: 15.

**Mindful Healing – Finding Peace in the Storm:** Learn how to face and transform stress, pain, and illness, manage anxiety and be comfortable with uncertainty. Cultivate resilience to respond to life's challenges and keep a positive attitude. Connect with and develop inner resources and learn practical skills to work with and process difficult emotions of fear, grief, and anger. Learn mindfulness meditation as we train the mind and open the heart to awaken joy, kindness, and compassion. Facilitator: Dr. Paul Epstein. Class limit: 20.



## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Parkinson's Support:** Facilitated by Maureen Matuszewski and Alison Smith, this group will share challenges, techniques, support, and knowledge on Parkinson's Disease. Professional guest speakers are often invited to share their knowledge. Family and caregivers are welcome.

**SWCAA Caregiver Support:** Terry Giegengack, MA will be facilitating this support group for those caring for loved ones with chronic illnesses. This program is designed to help learn and improve coping skills, relaxation techniques and develop a support network for those taking care of loved ones. This program is co-sponsored by the WCSA and SWCAA (Southwestern CT Agency on Aging) Donations accepted Class limit: 15.

### **Writing & Discussion Groups**

**Current Events:** Facilitator Jon Fox leads a dynamic, interactive discussion on issues throughout the world and on happenings right here in Westport. Feel free to express your opinion in a safe and respected atmosphere. Class limit: 30.

**Focus on Contemporary Issues with Art Gottlieb:** Historian Art Gottlieb will lead an in-depth discussion centered solely on one issue in the current news cycle. The featured topic will be examined from every relevant viewpoint and will include active input from the audience. Subject matter will be chosen near the actual presentation date. Those wishing to make suggestions of topics for discussion are invited to contact Mr. Gottlieb at agott@optonline.net.

**"Shelf Awareness" Book Club:** Join the book club facilitated by Jill Meyer. The club **will NOT meet in July or August. The next meeting will be Sept. 8** to discuss the "Scarlett Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne **from 2:00 – 3:00 pm**. Participants are required to get their own books. Books and Kindle versions are available at local libraries, as well as, online or at local bookstores. **Pre-register online at [myactivecenter.com](http://myactivecenter.com).** Class limit: 12.

## **WCSA Class Descriptions Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Shakespeare Discussion Group:** William Shakespeare is arguably the most famous crafter of words in the English language. Join us as we engage in a lively discussion of three of his best-known plays: *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Macbeth*. Shakespeare Scholar (and Westport's Poet Laureate) Diane Lowman will lead the class in a spirited group exploration. **Participants are asked to bring a copy of the play with them to class.** *Please note this is not a lecture series; participants should have at least some familiarity with each play.* Diane received her M.A. in Shakespeare Studies from the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Instructor: Diane Lowman. Class limit: 12.

**Ekphrastic Writing:** Ekphrastic (ek'frastik) refers to a form of writing wherein the author describes another work of art, usually visual. It is used to convey the deeper symbolism of the artwork through the written word. It has often been found that ekphrastic writing is rhetorical in nature and symbolic of a greater meaning. In this class a painting from the walls of the WCSA will be chosen each week as the essay subject matter. Instructor: Diane Lowman. Class limit: 12.

**Finding the Right Words & Writing About Illness:** How do we write about difficult subjects? How do we write about local illness? How do we write about illnesses within our bodies, that no one else can feel? Instructor Dustin Lowman suffers from a chronic digestive condition. He had never written about it before because he did not think anyone would understand. How do we give voice to the forces which threaten our bodies? How do we find language to make someone feel what only we feel? Instructor: Dustin Lowman. Class limit: 12.

**Book Discussion – “*The History of the World In 6 Glasses*”:** According to the L.A. times: “There aren't many books this entertaining that also provide a cogent crash course in ancient, classical and modern history.” Author Tom Standage's deft, innovative account of world history, these six beverages (wine, beer, sprits, tea, coffee and Coca-Cola) turn out to be much more than just ways to quench thirst. They also represent six eras that span the course of civilization — from the adoption of agriculture to the birth of cities, to the advent of globalization. “*A History of the World in 6 Glasses*” tells the story of humanity from the Stone Age to the twenty-first century through each epoch's signature refreshment. A copy of the book is included in the cost of the class. Books may be picked up at the front desk of the WCSA. Instructor: Art Gottlieb. Class limit: 20.

## **WCSA Instructor Biographies – Fall 2021**

**Sandy Adamczyk** has taught dance and exercise classes for the past 14 years with the WCSA and Westport Continuing Education. While teaching Ballroom Dancing at Arthur Murray Dance Studio, her students competed and won top student awards and honored Sandy with a Top Teacher Award. She has competed and won the New England Ballroom championship throughout the Fred Astaire studios. Sandy's life-long education has equipped her with the expertise to assess student's needs and identify their individual strengths and weaknesses. She possesses a rare combination of extensive and holistic knowledge.

**Lisa Arnold** teaches at the Silvermine and Guilford Art Centers. Lisa was a Creative Coordinator for Brides Magazine and art lecturer at the School of Visual Arts, NYC, Norwalk Community College and the Parsons School of Design, NY.

**Elizabeth Atkin MA, LPC, NCC** is a Licensed Professional Counselor who currently resides in Fairfield County. Elizabeth received her B.A. at Western Connecticut State University in Psychology and Marketing and graduated from Fairfield University with Honors with an M.A. in Counseling. Elizabeth has worked for many years in mental health for non-profit agencies in Bridgeport, Stamford and Norwalk, specializing in co-occurring disorders with all ages and stages of life with a passion for holistic focusing on mind, body and spirit. She is also a trained EMDR therapist.

**Kyra Avalotis** has taught beading, jewelry and stained glass making for 17 years at the WCSA.

**Dyan DeCastro** is passionate about motivating the 50+ population to stay healthy, strong, and pain-free. She has been teaching Essentrics for over seven years and loves that Essentrics helps her students increase strength and mobility to maintain their independence. Through gentle, coordinated, and full-body movements, Dyan guides her students towards increased physical vitality and mental well-being.

**Deirdre Ekholdt** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) for the Town of Westport, Department of Human Services. Deirdre has over 15 years' experience in a variety of settings such as inpatient and outpatient clinics. Deirdre's areas of expertise are in supporting people, dealing with life stressors relating to depression and anxiety, grief and loss issues, and family and relationship issues. Deirdre is a 200-hour RYT Yoga teacher and enjoys teaching mindfulness, meditation and breathing techniques to assist people with stressful situations.

**Paul Epstein, ND** is a graduate of the National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM), specializing in mind-body integrative medicine and mindful healing. He maintains a thriving private practice in Westport, CT; travels extensively, lecturing, leading workshops and retreats worldwide; and offers imagery and mindfulness healing seminars. Dr. Epstein offers professional training and mentoring for health professionals to support, train and mentor those wanting to integrate mind-body medicine in their therapeutic work.

## **WCSA Instructor Biographies – Fall 2021**

**Althea Ericsson:** is a graduate of the Yale University School of architecture and Parsons School of Design. She teaches at Senior Centers and in lower Fairfield County.

**Charlene Erwin** was certified in 2002 by the Pilates Method Alliance and maintains this certification through the recently renamed National Pilates Certification Program. Charlene is certified as well in Personal Training and Group Exercise by the American Council on Exercise (ACE).

**Terry Giegengack's** professional experience includes casework and administrative positions. She served as the Director and Department Head for the Fairfield Department of Human Services, including the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities. Previously, she served as the Assistant Director for Client Services in the Westport Department of Human Services. Her graduate education was completed at Fairfield University with a Master's Degree in Counseling. Continuing graduate education coursework was earned at the Fordham School of Social Services and at Fairfield University's School for Education and Allied Professions in supervision. Recent training was received with the CT Alzheimer's Association in group facilitation.

**Chris Goldbach** teaches studio art at the Silvermine Arts Center and at senior centers in lower Fairfield County on Zoom.

**Nancy Gollinger** is a multi-certified fitness professional who focuses on improving the health of special populations.

**Art Gottlieb** is a local historian on subjects of political and military history. He was formerly a professional curator of naval history and the Technical Director of Exhibits at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in NYC. In these roles, Mr. Gottlieb worked regularly with veterans of all services towards the creation of exhibits accurately illustrating the history of 20th century warfare.

**Patty Kondub** is a multi-certified fitness instructor with 35-plus years' experience. Her philosophy is to have fun while exercising for your mind/body/spirit. She is a Westport native who is also the Staples High School Girls' Golf Coach and Aqua Fitness Coordinator at the Westport Y. Her chair aerobic workouts have been featured on Public Access Channel 79 on Friday's during the pandemic.

**Jeannie Stevens Labate** has been teaching Yoga since 2001. Her classes are geared toward creating a safe, warm, and healing environment. Jeannie's teaching comes from a background in a few types of yoga: Ashtanga, Vinyasa, Yin, Children's, Senior Citizens and Chair Yoga. Jeannie has the unique ability to teach a multi-level class whether you are new to yoga or a seasoned practitioner. Her mantra is "Yoga is here to heal you, not hurt you." Just listen to your body and breath.

## **WCSA Instructor Biographies – Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Judith Lambertson** studied at the National Academy of Art, New York, and the Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, Massachusetts. She has a B.S. in Occupational Therapy from Columbia University and an M.S. in Gerontology from the College of New Rochelle.

**Mari Lewis** is an experienced Tai Chi instructor certified by the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association. She is a direct disciple of Grand Master Yang Jun 5th generation lineage carrier of the Yang style Tai Chi Chuan.

**Karen Liss** has been teaching group fitness classes since she was 19 years old. In the decades since, she has reached thousands of people in New York City, Long Island, Westchester, Buffalo and for the past 20 years, Fairfield County. Her emphasis on bringing fun to every class (no matter how difficult the workout) accounts for her constant smile and ability to make people laugh. Her philosophy has always been that everyone is welcome, everyone should experience the joy of movement, and any effort is far better than sitting on the couch!

**Diane Lowman's** essays have appeared in many publications, including *O, The Oprah Magazine*; *Brain, Child*; *Brevity Blog*; and *When Women Waken*. She writes a weekly column called *Everything's an Essay*. In addition to essays, she has written a memoir called *Nothing But Blue*, which was published in November 2018. Shortly thereafter, she received her M.A. in Shakespeare Studies from the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute. In July 2019, she was named Westport, CT's first Poet Laureate.

**Dustin Lowman** is a writer and musician located in South Norwalk, CT. A self-described "word mechanic," he owns and operates a creative consultancy, Guitar & Pen, which specializes in ghostwriting for business leaders. He has also released two collections of original songs: *Folk Songs* and *Carnavalesque* and is collaborating with a dressmaker on a poetry/visual art chapbook entitled *Loose Threads*. Dustin has an MFA in Writing from School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).

**Linda McKie-McClellan** is a local artist who studied at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, The Wooster Art Center in Danbury CT and The Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT.

**Wendy Matthews** plays soprano uke as part of a duo group called the Edukated Fleas. Wendy was charmed by the instrument's portability and quirkiness and took it up a few years back to accompany her singing. She has been singing and playing a variety of instruments since her teens. The Edukated fleas have delighted audiences in venues as varied as the Clearwater Festival, Hoot on the Hudson, Ukulele Cabaret and New York Ukulele Festival, as well as, street fairs, restaurants, libraries, art openings and private parties across New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine. On her travels, Wendy has also performed in exotic locales such as Honduras and Borneo!

## **WCSA Instructor Biographies – Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Nell Mednick** is a native of Francophone, Switzerland, from the picturesque town of Vevey on Lake Geneva. Nell earned her Baccalaureate in the German speaking city of Basel, where she became fluent in German. At age 18, she joined her parents in México City and after a brief intensive course, she enrolled in the University of México City and graduated with a degree in Spanish literature and Mexican Art History. She later received a degree in Fine Arts from Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria). In 1973, she married an American in Switzerland and moved with her family to the US. Nell started a career in photography and had her own business for event photography until 2012. She loves people and languages!

**Shelley Moll** is an ACE (American Council on Exercise) certified Group Fitness Instructor. You might know her from her many years at the Westport Y as the Health and Wellness Director or from Anytime Fitness where she managed the Silver Sneaker program. Her most recent certifications are ACE Certified Senior Exercise Specialist, Bionic Hips and Knees (Exercise for those with hip and knee replacements), Brains and Balance Certification along with Cancer Exercise Specialist, Melt and many other fitness and wellness related certifications. Her years of experience in the fitness industry allow her to provide safe and effective workouts for all.

**Denise O'Hearn** is a certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher and Reiki Practitioner. She helps people find relief from chronic pain and tension. Denise is a strong yet gentle and compassionate teacher who is enthusiastic about sharing the benefits of yoga and natural healing.

**Dick Rauh** came to botanical painting in retirement after a career in motion picture special effects. A collection of his work received a gold medal from the Royal Horticultural Society in January 2006 and a Best in Show award. Dick teaches at the New York Botanical Gardens.

**Judy Samuels** is a certified NASM personal trainer, Corrective Exercise Coach, Precision Nutrition Coach and an AFAA Certified Group Fitness Instructor. Judy's been teaching fitness for over 20 years and especially enjoys working with seniors. She has taught strength training, TRX, Mat Pilates Mix, Core Barre, outdoor fun boot camps, Muscle and Tone, Parkinson's Boxing Circuit Classes and does one-on-one personal training (now through Zoom!). She enjoys running, live theatre, needlepoint and mostly spending time with her family and dog Muffin.



## **WCSA Instructor Biographies – Fall 2021 (continued)**

**Paula Pastorelli-Schooler** is a Certified Yoga Therapist with the International Association of Yoga Therapists (2017) and founder of Inquire Within Yoga for 20 years. With safety as the foundation of her classes, she encourages her students and clients to listen to their inner guidance using breath and posture as tools to cultivate their awareness in building their own practice. She has studied with many masters including her most powerful guide, Matt Sanford, who teaches Adaptive Yoga from his wheelchair. Paula is a graduate of the UMASS Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program developed by John Kabat -Zinn.

**Nor Smitobol** was born and raised in Bangkok, Thailand, where he earned an architectural degree. Nor holds master's degrees from Pratt Institute and is a licensed architect in NY and PA. For thirty years, Nor worked at the United Nations in NYC and other duty stations. Favorite media: watercolor, sketch, stained glass, clay work, rock painting, paperwork, and 3D origami.

**Maria Vailakis-Wippick** has been teaching the ancient art and science of yoga since 2003. She teaches to the needs of the individual and focuses on releasing tensions in the body and expanding the breath as the pathway to peace, well-being, and vitality.